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LITHUANIA WANTS EXPLANATION OF KOZYREV'S STATEMENT. The Lithuanian Foreign Ministry on 18 April called in the Russian ambassador in Vilnius, Nikolai Obertyshev, to explain Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev's remarks that Russia might use military force to protect Russians living abroad, BNS reported. Kozyrev also said that Estonia and Latvia were the only two former Soviet republics in which there was talk about a deliberate policy of banishing ethnic Russians. Obertyshev promised Lithuanian Foreign Ministry Secretary Albinas Januska that he would offer an official explanation and said he was certain that the statement did not apply to Lithuania. -- Saulius Girnius, OMRI, Inc.

LITHUANIA, BELARUS AGREE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION. Lithuanian and Belarusian Environment Ministers Bronius Bradauskas and Mikhail Rusy signed in Minsk on 14 April an agreement on cooperation in the field of environmental protection. Gintautas Siulys, first secretary in the Lithuanian embassy in Minsk, told BNS on 18 April that a joint working group has been set up to monitor protection of water resources, vegetation and animals as well as industrial waste recycling and other environmental projects. Bradauskas also urged Belarus to sign the Vienna convention on third countries' responsibility in dealing with the consequences of nuclear accidents. He said that Belarus's reluctance to join the convention is preventing Lithuania from receiving international assistance to upgrade its nuclear power plant at Ignalina. He was told that the Belarus Environment Ministry has advised the government to join the convention but that the matter is still under consideration. -- Saulius Girnius, OMRI, Inc.